

miserable for the Building of new Churches, they might have provided twice the amount of church accommodation they have, in far handsomer buildings, and we should have heard nothing of Papal Aggression.

To return, however, to our building. In spite of all the praise that has been lavished upon it, the design is far from being either artistic or satisfactory, or even such a design as might easily have been obtained with better arrangements. Its great, almost its only merit is, that it is a common-sense design, but the public are amazed as well as delighted, at having at last got what for centuries has been denied them. The best feature in the design is, beyond all doubt, the circular roof of the transept, but that was Mr. Barry's suggestion, and had his idea been adopted of carrying the same roof down the whole length of the centre aisle, the building would have had some pretension to architectural beauty.

But it may be asked, if Mr. Barry could thus design the best feature of the building, why could he not design the whole? Simply because he is an architect, and is, by the charter of his guild, bound to copy. Neither his education nor the taste of his employers will allow of his doing any thing that is not correct; and the consequence is that he must spend his life puzzling over Greek mouldings, and Gothic details, neither satisfying himself nor pleasing any one else; and so it will continue to be, unless this great experiment open the eyes of the public, and they perceive that an ounce of common sense is worth a ton of mimicry; and when they do, there will no longer be that dissonance between an architect and his works that at present exists, nor that disservice of opinion that unhappily prevails between them and the public. It is true it took the Greek and Gothic architects some centuries of perseverance in the path of common sense to accomplish what they did; but when we see what has been accomplished in one short life-time, we need not despair. Fifty years ought easily to put us in advance of all that has gone before.

My letter is already too long; but, before concluding, allow me one word of peroration, in the form of an assertion, which I think architects would do well to ponder over before going further. It is this,—that the first building which has been erected in this country with which all are pleased, is also the first in which copying has been wholly abandoned, and common sense, and common sense only, has dictated the design of every part and of every detail, wholly irrespective of all the so-called rules of art; and the unsatisfactory corollary to this is, that to obtain this result, it was necessary to take the work out of the hands of the profession, after they had been fairly called on to compete, and to put it into the hands of a gardener!

If architects will take this "shining example" to heart, and be warned by it in time, they have nothing to fear; but if they neglect it, I am afraid that, in spite of all that was said at the late meeting of the Institute, engineers and gardeners will take the bread out of their mouths. Once the people see what can be done by common sense, they never again can be satisfied with copying.

JAS. FERGUSON.

#### NOTES ON EARLY SCOTCH ARCHITECTS.\*

SCARCELY anything has been collected as to the architects of Scotland before the eighteenth century. Not much perhaps was preserved, but no attempt has been made to gather or illustrate even the few and scanty memorials that survive. Of the builders of our many cathedral and conventual churches only one name had been handed down to us—that of Gilbert of Murray, a kinsman of the great lords of Sutherland, who, towards the middle of the thirteenth century, reared the High Church of Caithness, at Dornoch. He was a churchman—the bishop of the see whose cathedral he built; and Sir Robert Gordon, writing two centuries ago, records the tradition that "all the glass which served that church was made by St. Gilbert his appointment beside Sideray (now written Cyderhall), two miles west from Dornoch." As a much later

period we have the names of several of those to whom was entrusted the repairing or completing of our great ecclesiastical structures. They would seem to have been Frenchmen for the most part. He was a Parisian by birth, John Murdo or Murvo, who towards the end of the fifteenth century had the charge of the cathedrals of Glasgow and St. Andrews, of the conventual churches of Paisley and Melrose, and of the abbeys in Nithdale and Galloway. A few years later, Thomas French built one of the transepts of the cathedral of Aberdeen, and the fine bridge of seven arches which spans the Dee about two miles to the south of that city. The first secular buildings, possessing any architectural character, which arose in the north, were perhaps the design of the unknown masters to whom we owe our monasteries and cathedrals. It is recorded of St. Gilbert of Murray, that beside his cathedral of Dornoch, he built many royal castles. Kildrumny, in Mar, is said to be one of them. Mr. Robertson doubted not that a little intelligent research among our extant rolls and records would recover at least the names of a good many of the builders of our greater palaces and castles—perhaps also of an occasional church—from the middle of the fourteenth to the close of the seventeenth century. He had himself noted a few. In the year 1363 Sir William of Dieschington, knight, steward of the King's house, and sheriff of Fife, was "master of work" of the church of St. Monan, in Fife,—a not unpleasing example of the Decorated or Middle Pointed style. In the year 1431, Alexander of Crichton—a kinsman of the subtle chiefs who reared the stately towers of Crichton—was master of work of the royal castle of Kildrumny. Other names were those of Gray, Spot, Gulde, Livingston, Valandy, Weddale, and Weir, who appeared during the first half of the fifteenth century in connection with the palaces of Linlithgow and Leith, the castles of Edinburgh and Stirling, and bridges over the Tay at Perth, and the Dee at Aberdeen. The architect's fee for the last mentioned work was to be 20*l.* a year for ten years. The name of Thomas of Cochrane—master of works to King James III.—has a place in history. The King, it is said, wished to raise him to the peerage; but the proud nobles, indignant that "a mason," as they termed him, should be made an Earl, put him to an ignominious death at the bridge of Lauder in 1482. Under King James V., in the beginning of the following century, Sir James Hamilton of Fyffart was employed in building or repairing the palaces of Falkland and Linlithgow, and the castles of Edinburgh, Stirling, and Rothesay. Passing to the early years of the seventeenth century, we notice a nobleman whose "great skill in architecture" was especially commended by his contemporaries—Alexander Seton, Earl of Dunfermline—under whose care the lordly chateaux of Fyvie assumed its present shape. To Lord Dunfermline also may be ascribed much of the beauty of Pinkie House. Another noble architect of the same century was Patrick third Earl of Kinghorn and first Earl of Strathmore, who died in the year 1695, at the age of fifty-two. To him we owe the imposing pile of Glamis as it now stands. In a minute history which he has left us of his labours, he takes blame to himself for not consulting "any who in this age were known and reputed to be the best judges and contrivers." In the works hitherto spoken of, Gothic or Mediæval styles either reigned uncontrolled or greatly predominated. Classic features would seem to have owed their first introduction to foreigners—natives of Italy—who brought with them the taste for Roman architecture newly revived beyond the Alps. Perhaps no earlier traces of *renaissance* are to be found in Scotland than those which present themselves in the collegiate chapel of Roslin, built about the middle of the fifteenth century, and, according to an ancient tradition, by an architect from Italy. King James IV. had in his employment "an Italian mason," who had a salary of 7*l.* a month, and to whose hand, perhaps, may be ascribed certain architectural peculiarities of Holyrood and Stirling. When taste and art began to revive after the tempest and wars of the Reformation, classic types rapidly advanced in prominence. In the elaborate ceilings of the castles of Craigherrin in Mar, and of Balcarres in Fife, we see the

warriors of Troy mingling their effigies with those of the Judges of Israel and the elder Kings of the Scots. This was early in the seventeenth century. The middle of that age saw the building of Heriot's Hospital, in which classic detail mingles still more largely with the spirit of the Middle Ages. He thought that they might now, without much hesitation, venture to vindicate the chief merit of this beautiful structure for a Scottish architect, William Aytoun, whose portrait, inscribed "Measter Meason to Heriot's Yorke," hangs in the Governors' room of the hospital. Beside his share in this edifice, Aytoun is known to have been the architect of Innes House, in Murray, receiving as his fee "for drawing the form of the house on paper" a sum of 26*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* The name of another Scottish architect of the seventeenth century (John Montgomery, of Old Rayne) has been preserved in connection with the fine Market Cross of Aberdeen, built in the year 1650. Newville House, in Fife, was built in the year 1692, by Mr. James Smith, who is described by the editor of the "Vitruvius Britannicus," as "the most experienced architect of that kingdom of Scotland." The same work gives a plate of Drumlanrig Castle, in Dumfriesshire, built in the time of the first and second Dukes of Queensbury, but does not name the architect. Mr. Robertson reserved the last place in his catalogue—a meagre and imperfect one, he said—for Sir William Bruce, of Kinross, who might be regarded as standing between the obscure or forgotten builders whose names had been enumerated, and their successors the Gibbess, the Adamsons, and the Mylne, whose works were known to every one. Like so many of the earlier architects of the north, Sir William Bruce was a man of some rank—the hereditary sheriff of the small shire of Kinross. He appears as King's architect "his Majesty's surveyor," as it was termed, in 1671. He had the dignity of Knight Baronet before 1685. Married to a lady named Halkett, he had a son, his successor, Sir John, and a daughter, who carried his estate and lineage into the knightly family of Hope of Craighall and Pinkie. He himself died about the year 1720, and, strange to say, his name did not seem to have found a place in any Scottish biographical collection. The mansion-house which he built for himself at Kinross, about 1685, was long one of the architectural boasts of Scotland. His plan of Hopetoun House—since built over by Adam—is engraved in the "Vitruvius Britannicus." The structure is there said to have been begun in 1694, and to have occupied four years in building. An earlier work of the architect was Holyrood Palace, begun about 1671, and finished, apparently, about 1679, though not, unhappily, altogether as Sir William first designed it. The first royal tenant of the new palace was the Duke of York, afterwards King James II. One memorial of that prince's taste survives in the name of "the Duke's Walk," another rests upon less certain authority. He is said to have contemplated the erection of a city upon the site on which the New Town of Edinburgh arose nearly a century afterwards; and, so far had the matter gone, that his architect, Sir William Bruce, is reported to have planned a bridge for spanning the valley of the North Loch. This, at least, was affirmed by a tradition which was committed to record about seventy years ago. Alexander Kincaid—whose history of Edinburgh was printed in the year 1757—while giving all credit to Provost Drummond for the building of the New Town, adds that he was informed on good authority, that even this gentleman was not the original projector, of so grand a plan. "The Duke of York," he continues, "afterwards the unfortunate James VII. was the person who, in a visit to Edinburgh, had the penetration to discover at one view the improvements that might be made, and pointed out to the magistrates the extension of the city both on the south and the north sides. No person, however, from that time, seems to have formed any design of putting in practice those improvements which the monarch thought possible, until Provost Drummond, by an indefatigable exertion of his interest with Government, obtained Parliamentary sanction for the improvement of the city, and by an equally unremitting exertion of the influence which his superior merit deservedly gave him over the people, prevailed on them to concur in the proper methods of

\* The Heads of the paper by Mr. Joseph Robertson, published in the Architectural Institute of Scotland, as mentioned in the text.